

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1735, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZA- TION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1735, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

As a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, I take issue with the irresponsible manner in which this authorization approaches funding of our National Defense. This bill uses the Overseas Contingency Operations fund to avoid congressionally mandated budget caps for fiscal year 2016—an approach that fails to provide the appropriate budget and funding structure that enables the Department of Defense to operate in the most effective and efficient manner over both the short-term and long-term planning horizons. This is Congress' most important role. We need to do this right.

In addition, this Conference Report prevents the responsible transfer of detainees from Guantanamo Bay and continues the existence of a detention facility which serves as propaganda for extremists and undermines our moral standing in the world. Many of the detainees who remain were cleared for transfer nearly six years ago by the Guantanamo Review Task Force—an interagency effort that included the Departments of Defense, Justice, State, and Homeland Security, as well as the Director of National Intelligence. The transfer restrictions interfere with the administration's executive role in responsibly closing this facility, wasting valuable resources, and making us less safe. This facility needs to be closed.

H.R. 1735 fails to heed the expert advice and request of numerous senior leaders in the Department of Defense, Department of the Air Force, and Department of the Army, who all repeatedly testified regarding the problem of sustaining excess facilities. I understand that many of my colleagues are concerned about potentially losing a military base in their district; however, we should not force the Defense Department to hold onto excess infrastructure and assets that are of diminishing military value. The best way to address this problem is to authorize a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and ensure our military bases are operating in the smartest, most efficient and effective manner. This bill prevents that from happening.

I recognize that passing the NDAA is described as a tradition, but tradition is an inadequate reason to support legislation that undermines the ability of our Defense leaders to properly manage the largest portion of our federal budget—the portion responsible for National Security—and effectively undermines the health and safety of the women and men who carry out that mission.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1735—National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

SYDNEY HUGHES TRIBUTE

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sydney Hughes of Meeker, Colorado. She was recently awarded a National Inter-scholastic Athletic Administrators Association student athlete scholarship for her excellence on and off the field.

The National Athletic Administrators Association awards scholarships to high school students based on their academic achievement and athletic accomplishments. Ms. Hughes was selected to the second team All-state girls' basketball team for the 2014–2015 season and was the only player from the Third Congressional District of Colorado to hold such honor in division 2A girls' basketball. She was also selected to the Western Slope Grand Mesa All-Conference teams in volleyball and track and field, all while maintaining a 4.2 Grade Point Average throughout her high school career.

Excellence in academics and athletics provides a wealth of life-long advantages, not least because they instill qualities of discipline, perseverance, and teamwork that are hallmarks of future success. Ms. Hughes embodies all of these qualities and knows that her resiliency and dedication in high school athletics and academics will continue through college and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to represent inspiring high school students like Ms. Hughes and I wish her nothing but the best as she continues through life's challenges. She is a terrific role model for her peers and represents the best that the Third District has to offer.

CELEBRATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ITALIAN PRISONERS OF WAR ASSIGNED TO LETTERKENNY ARMY DEPOT, CHAMBERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of World War II's Italian Service Units, in particular, the 321st Quartermaster Battalion once assigned to Letterkenny Army Depot near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

During the summer of 1943, fierce fighting took place across North Africa and Sicily between Allied Forces and the Axis Powers. The

U.S. and its allies captured approximately 275,000 prisoners of war and sent nearly 1,250 Italian soldiers to the Letterkenny Army Depot in Pennsylvania. A few months later, an armistice was signed with Italy and the one-time foes transformed into Italian Service Units culminating as the 321st Quartermaster Battalion.

With sworn allegiance to the United States, they spent the next seventeen months ordering, stocking and shipping critical military items to our men and women serving in the Pacific and European Theaters of war. The rugged labor and staunch commitment of the 321st Quartermaster Battalion were integral to the Allies' eventual defeat of the Axis Powers. Additionally, the men once held prisoner now helped to construct the depot itself, including a chapel and bell tower resplendent in Tuscan style.

As we mark the 70th Anniversary of the end of World War II, we also celebrate the repatriation of these distinctive soldiers and honor their contributions to both our home front and efforts abroad. They will forever remain entwined in our history and in our hearts.

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Metropolitan State University of Denver, or MSU Denver, on its 50th anniversary. The extraordinary faculty and staff at MSU Denver have had an incredible impact on the lives of students in my district and on the Denver community as a whole.

Since its founding in 1965, MSU Denver has been known as a gateway to opportunity. The University opens its doors to students from all walks of life and provides rigorous academic coursework relevant to the Colorado economy. The University formed out of an idea for a new, different type of college, dedicated to supporting hard-working, scrappy students who might not otherwise have an opportunity to attend an institution of higher education. As a sign of its future success, MSU Denver enrolled double the number of students than anticipated when it first opened its doors on October 1, 1965.

Today, MSU Denver is Colorado's urban land-grant university, offering individualized, relevant bachelor's and select master's degrees to more undergraduate Coloradans than any other four-year university in the state. It has served as a leader in diverse enrollment among Colorado's four-year universities with 35 percent students of color and 32 percent first-generation students this year. The University has been a leader in educating students to think critically, solve problems, address community concerns, and meet Colorado's

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